CHAPTER — III

NO LONGER AT EASE: CRISIS OF HYBRID CULTURE
Achebe's second novel, No *Longer at Ease* presents succinctly the intricate relationship between European individualism and African tribalism and the impact of the former to the latter and the resultant cultural fragmentation of a society exposed to the West. The novel captures the horrendous and tyrannical experience of exploitation and oppression and the impact of colonialism—social, political, economic, cultural and most importantly, the psychological crisis resulting from the colonial encounter. Again, Achebe vents a very hard-hitting and uncompromising attack on the neo-colonial elite for their role in the moral and economic decadence of contemporary African society and he also shows how the tendency of the elite to thrive on the borrowed culture has an adverse effect that exudes a kind of emotional confrontation in all walks of life—
a death-in-life situation which fills the lives of the natives with abnormal complexes. It would not be wrong to say that the Africans suffered a 'double colonization' one from European domination and the other from the neocolonial elite.

Colonialism is an all encompassing rot in Africa. The vortex of colonial forces destroyed and effeminized the sensibility of the colonized by conditioning their mentality and crushing their confidence, belief and faith in themselves, and successfully poison the minds of the elite as well as a great deal of the masses to feel allergic and revulsive towards their own cultural traditions and history. Colonialism denies human rights and dignity to human beings whom it has subdued and controlled by means of violence so as to keep the people in a state of victimization and marginalization by force. Since colonialism was based on race, class, colour and sex, the Africans had the worst form of colonial history of suppression. And this process started ever since the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade that flourished over 350 years. With the advent of Christianity and the subsequent imposition of colonial administration, the tribal African world had been displaced and dislocated beyond recognition, all that to justify "military domination, cultural displacement and economic exploitation."²

The clash of the two cultures of the colonizer and the colonized doesn't simply mean the replacement of the old by the new order. It releases a very
dangerous kind of a negative energy – alienation and disbelief in self and in one’s own culture and past. A meaningful culture survives intact only when it is attached to the social organization of life on which it is built. The socio-historical tragedy of African society goes beyond just an acceleration of change. Religion is the heart and soul of the African people. As S.C. Ukpabi has pointed out:

Since religion was the basis of African culture, law and ethics, any attack on it meant also an attack on the main foundation of African social order.³

Cultures were colliding in Africa and the collision was never ever a smooth process. The collision of the cultures of the colonizer and the colonized is, indeed, a tearing leap which puts enormous strain on both community and individual, because very often the best are not counted but the worst are acquired or/and retained. Achebe says:

Unfortunately when two cultures meet, you would expect, if we were angels shall we say, we could pick out the best in the other and retain the best in our own, and this would be wonderful. But this doesn’t happen often. What happens is that some of the worst elements of the old are retained and some of the worst of the new are added on to them.⁴
Another aspect of the collision of cultures is essentially the growth of hybridized society that strangulates the native mores followed by a loss of a moral centre culminating in some form of ambiguity and Janus-faced reality.

*No Longer at Ease*, set in the city of Lagos, in the mid nineteen fifties, just before Nigerian independence, portrays a completely compromised community — it is thoroughly corrupt and chaotic caused by a clash of two incompatible value systems where a moral vacuum is created by the absence of a legitimate cultural authority. It is important to note that the two different cultures of the colonizer and the colonized seen in Achebe’s first novel, *Things Fall Apart* have fused and overlapped to produce a new materialistic and hybridized world which is characterized by disintegration, incoherence and loss of direction. The collapse of the traditional order, under the weight of a materialistic world is highlighted by Achebe in this way:

The success of [Ibo] culture was the balance between the two, the material and the spiritual ... Today we have kept the materialism and thrown away the spirituality which should keep it in check.⁵

Cultural collision results in ‘moral anarchy’ and it is into this ‘moral anarchy’ that Obi Okonkwo, the protagonist of the novel, is going to plunge headlong. Obi
Okonkwo, a ‘been-to’ is presented as the son of Isaac, formerly Nwaye, who defies his own father, Okonkwo with remarkable moral strength to become a Christian in *Things Fall Apart*. Regarding the structure of the novel, Olatuboson Ogunsanwo comments thus:

The ironic contrast between Obi and his own father parallels the ironic contrast between his own father and the grandfather. This artistic design aesthetically and thematically knits up the Okonkwo saga.⁶

Obi is a man of two worlds, a hybrid man who is lost in the confusion of values. Achebe is going to highlight the predicament of a hybrid man in a disintegrated society in which a meaningful social and moral orientation is made difficult. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin define hybridity in this way:

Hybridity occurs in post-colonial societies as a result of conscious moments of cultural suppression, as when the colonial power invades to consolidate political and economic control, or when settler-invaders dispossess indigenous peoples and force them to ‘assimilate’ to new social patterns. It may also occur in later periods when patterns of immigration from the metropolitan
societies and from other imperial areas of influence (e.g. indentured labourers from India and China) continue to produce complex cultural palimpsests with the post-colonized world. 

The interference of the colonizer in the academic and social set-up results in educational hybridity that alienates him from his own culture and society and at the same time makes him incapable to belong to the English society altogether. The predicament of the hybrid is expressed by Krishnan Das and Deepchand Patra in this way:

Often, the dilemma is one of the double edged sword: the knowledge the student seeks through his education is something that might take him further away from the values and the life that he feels tied to through his ancestry. Forced to try to negotiate two generally conflicting value systems simultaneously, the hybrid faces daunting obstacles and painful realizations.

This is exactly the kind of predicament Obi Okonkwo faces as a hybrid man, 'a man of two worlds'. In the African context acculturation is never a smooth riding process. It dismantled the whole cultural set-up thereby resulting in the premature death of idyllic pre-colonial African way of life. Mala Pandurang explains thus:
This transition from one cultural mode to another was neither smooth nor natural. Once set in motion, the speed of change was far more rapid than was typical of other societies and with far deeper implications.\(^9\)

The crisis of hybrid culture which results in ambivalence of consciousness is the main focus of Achebe in his second novel, *No Longer at Ease*. The title of the novel chosen from T.S. Eliot 'Journey of the Magi', indicates the psychic dislocation experienced by the protagonist and the general confusions that spreads in Africa as well. In 1950, the time the novel is set, many educated Africans became part of responsible government positions as the constitution of 1954 gave authority and power in terms of administration to African members of government. As the nation marched towards independence, the natives looked up to the elite for a better change and a new euphoria. But ironically, the residual effect of colonialism remained so deeply rooted that it was almost impossible to get rid of it. As Ngugi has expressed, "we have scorched the snake of colonialism, not killed it. Or rather colonialism was one of the myriad skins the snake can put on."\(^{10}\) As a matter of fact, colonial education, camouflaged under the garb of liberal education, released a kind of alienating force in Africa blowing away and uprooting all the traditional values which had held the tribes together. Colonial education subdued native capacity and helped in marginalizing
self from the immediate society. The nature of colonial education is such that it produces a kind of colonial mentality, corruptive and acquisitive bent of mind, and most importantly, the neo-elite becomes ‘parasitic’, ‘unimaginative’ and ‘lacking in initiative’. Education is used as a ladder to better jobs, money and to higher ways of living.

In Obi, Achebe seems sadly to be depicting the educated elite as spineless. Having been exposed to the western world and western education, Obi becomes a hybrid man with dual cultural value systems which incapacitate him to exist effectively in Nigeria.

Obi returns to Nigeria, after graduating from London, full of idealistic hopes for himself and refashioning the fate of Nigeria. It is a result of communal effort that Obi was sent to England (the Umuofia Progressive Union sponsors £800 loan to Obi) for his higher education. He is fully determined to get his country rid of corruption and he joins the Senior Civil Services with a firm belief “that the public service of Nigeria would remain corrupt until the old Africans at the top were replaced by young men from the universities” (205). But he is shocked when he confronts the reality – corrupted society and moral anarchy everywhere. His beloved Nigeria has undergone a sea-change and the wind of change has uprooted traditionalism from the society without a substantive replacement of the old values. This is acknowledged in the words of Odugwu.
Today greatness has changed its tune. Times are no longer great, neither are barns or large number of wives and children. Greatness is now in the things of the white man. And we too have changed our tune (218).

Obi’s idealism collides with reality and the result is spiritual disintegration. He is placed in an inescapable labyrinth from which there is no way of escape. Having been educated out of his background, Obi finds it difficult to comprehend the reality and he proves himself ineffectual. His dream of a healthy Nigeria is belied when he comes in direct confrontation with his real Lagos unlike the one he had visualized during his stay in England. The wide gap between Obi’s idealism and the reality of Lagos is typified in the juxtaposition between the scene in the poem (which Obi had written during his stay in England) and the scene in the slums where from “a wide-open storm drain next to a meat stall comes the very strong smell of a dog’s rotting flesh” (185). Abiola Irele brings out the predicament of Obi as a hybrid man:

Just as his western education is limited to a superficial aesthetic orientation, so his application is restricted to specific delimitations, rather than to the total field, of his social situation.
What the western education does to Obi, 'a been-to' is that the much coveted colonial education has robbed of all his finer sensibilities thus failing him to reconnect with his inner self. The Umuofia Progressive Union externalizes its dreams in Obi and the clansmen not only expect Obi to repay the "scholarship" but to be grateful enough to do them favour by working for the betterment of the community. They had sent him to study law so that he could handle all their land cases against their neighbours. Obi took up English instead of law and that was the first time Obi blighted the sentiments and hopes of his clansmen. His clansmen expect Obi to behave like a European, and at the same time, they also expect him to honour custom and tradition. It's quite difficult for Obi to be both a modern and a traditional man at a same time. This confusing situation is symbolical of the antagonism that exists between the colonizer's culture and the culture of the colonized and there is no meeting point at all between the two different cultures. The clansmen do not understand how Obi's attempt to be successful in the new life puts him in direct conflict with their expectations. Obi confronts the Umuofia Progressive Union who expects him to take a full advantage of his position and power. In a way, he lets his clansmen down and hurts their sentiments with his dress code, quite improper to his elevated status, and even the kind of English he speaks so unlike a 'been to' is quite irritating to his people. The clansmen expect Obi to have a high standard of living like a
European, driving an expensive car, and at the same time, being loyal to the Umuofia Progressive Union and helping his people to get jobs. This places Obi in a great ambiguous position and this ambiguity weighs very heavy in his mind and life that the very foundation of his western education is threatened and destabilized. The very knowledge he gains from Western education which is the mainspring of his power and position also releases alienation and detachment from the community. In this corrupt and disintegrating society full of confusion about old and new values without any social coherence and historical direction, Obi gets drowned in the whirlpool of a hybridized society that sucks him under. Obi’s western education fails him utterly to provide any fresh vision for a bright future.

What Achebe does in *No Longer at Ease* is “to give corruption a social context, and to show that the context is a complex interaction of African past, the colonial encounter, and the emergent new hybrid culture.”\(^{12}\) The theme of public corruption is beautifully suggested in the very first chapter of the novel itself when the people of Lagos were trying to attend the trial of Obi.

The case had been the talk of Lagos for a number of weeks and on this last day anyone who could possibly leaves his job was there to hear the judgment. Some Civil Servants paid as much as ten
shillings and six pence to obtain a doctor's certificate of illness for the day (173-174).

This shows that corruption has permeated all walks of life and there is no regard and respect for government, and people no longer have any kind of emotional attachment to their leaders or Government.

In Nigeria the government way 'they'. It had nothing to do with you or me. It was an alien institution and people's business was to get as much from it as they could without getting into trouble (200).

Here, Abdul R. Jan Mohamed's comment on the corrupt social milieu can be taken into account:

No social product or service has any intrinsic merit anymore, and the entire population seems to be motivated only by money – the medium of exchange has quickly become the goal of human activity and the measure of a man's social and moral worth.\(^\text{13}\)

In such a corrupt society, bribery and nepotism flourish in a vigorous and healthy manner disrupting the whole way of traditional tribal life. Snobbery replaces
pride and even social obligation becomes a bothersome affair. Any kind of relation lacks emotional commitment and people no longer hold any value to the old custom and tradition. The baffling conflict and misunderstanding hit and blast the expectations of many people who are entangled in the dual values and dual systems of a hybridized society. The worst hit victims are the western educated elite who return to their land that has pinned all hopes for a better Nigeria on them. Having assimilated the western cultural values because of their exposure to the West, the neo-elite are not able to share with the masses and fulfill their dreams. They get lost in their own world as their lives become more individualistic which run contrary to the feeling of oneness which is the essence of a traditional tribal life. The baffling conflict and problems between tradition and modernity in the educated West Africa is put by J.P. Clark, the African poet and playwright, in this manner:

The great complication, perhaps, for the West African elite brought up in a system not quite British is that he swims in a stream of double currents one traditional, the other modern. Both currents do not completely run parallel; in fact they are often in conflict. Accordingly, you are likely to find him at church or mosque in the morning and in the evening taking a title at home that carries with it sacrifice of some sort of his ancestors and community gods. In
the same manner, a man however 'detribalised' and successful in his city career and profession, will not outgrow the most backward member of his family."

Achebe paints a very painful picture of a fragmented and divided society writhing under the marauding forces of colonialism. All the characters are fragmentary with no moral centre in their lives. They have no unified view of life – the most torturing and painful situation in the life of a man. The identity symbols of these people have been disturbed and a drastically altered society confronts them. For example, Obi’s friend Christopher, an economist, has his religion of sex; Joseph, Obi’s countryman is quite modern in his outlook, but is traditional in a way that he informs Obi’s parents and the Umuofia Progressive Union of Obi’s relation with Clara, an osu. Obi’s father, Isaac Okonkwo, is a divided man in a divided society who strongly opposes his son’s marriage to an osu. Mr. Green, Obi’s boss, though in power, is powerless and blind to the fact that it is the western civilization which is responsible for the chaos and confusions that befall Africa. Finally Clara too, in spite of being a modern nurse, a ‘been-to’ is aware of the reality of her low caste.

In this fragmented society, Obi, a man of two divergent worlds, finds it very hard to survive intact. No doubt, the western education raises Obi’s standard
and status, but the whole structure of his personality has been destroyed and he lacks any sense of identity and purpose in life. David Cook rightly points out the complex psyche of Obi.

Obi pins himself to a half - baked intellectualism with grand but vague ideals supported by little precise thinking. He would no doubt shine in a debate about principles but is hardly even a beginner in the art of the possible.\textsuperscript{15}

Obi loses his determination to reform his country on his return from England as he doesn't know how or where to start. He introspects his own confused situation.

'Where does one begin? With the masses? Educate the masses?' ...

It would take centuries. A handful of men at the top. Or even man with a vision – an enlightened dictator. People are scared of the word nowadays. But what kind of democracy can exist side by side with so much corruption and ignorance? (210).

Obi betrays his educational standard when he fails to bridge the two alien cultures of the colonizer and the colonized. He flounders in his life and becomes
a self-centred man with a narcissistic psyche. This trait of Obi is best revealed in his relation with Clara. Their relation is rejected by both Obi’s parents and the clan. Inspite of a new and altered society introduced by the colonial rule, tradition still holds very strong in the life of the people. This is reflected in Isaac Okonkwo’s rejection of his son’s marriage to Clara. The comment made by Obi’s father regarding the notion of *osus* in Igbo society illuminates the larger truth that colonialism and Christianity have not been able to uproot the traditional custom and the persisting notion of *osus* in a well ordered and ceremonial society governed by traditional wisdom.

I know Josiah Okeke ... He is a good man and a good Christian. But he is *osu*. Naaman, captain of the host of Syria, was a great man and honourable, but he was a leper .... *osu* is like leprosy in the minds of our people. I beg of you, my son, not to bring the mark of shame and of leprosy into your family. If you do, your children and your children’s children unto the third and fourth generation will curse your memory (281-282).

Obi knows very well that there is no logic at all behind this rejection of his father against his marriage but unfortunately he has no fixed moral stand to fight back the rejection. Perhaps, his desire to marry Clara is not based on a firm and
conscious decision, but on a rather vague notion of how things ought to be. Initially, he stands up boldly against his family and clan regarding the affair with Clara to the extent that he even tries to challenge the whole basis on which the clan rests, the great bond of kinship.

Obi knew better than anyone else that his family would violently oppose the idea of marrying an osu. Who wouldn’t? But for him it was either Clara or nobody. Family ties were all very well as long as they did not interfere with Clara (235).

But his willingness and desire to fight back melt down gradually and his fighting spirit cannot hold any consistency and conviction as he lacks any ability to handle complex human situations. Through cowardice and arrogance, he fails to convince his father, and realizes in his life for the first time the shallowness of his mind. He maps and explores his mental topography.

His mind was troubled not only by what happened but also by the discovery that there was nothing in him to challenge it honestly (284).

The sadistic pleasure that he derives from humiliating his father reveals the dark side of Obi’s character:
He waited for his father to speak that he might put up another fight to justify himself ... for it was true what the Ibos say, that when a coward sees a man he can beat he becomes hungry for a fight. He had discovered he could beat his father (284-285).

Tensions take different shapes in the life of Obi and he realizes that he has nothing to give him a feeling of wholeness either in his own being or in the nature of things. He fails to win the approval and the heart of his mother, with whom he bonded very firmly right from his childhood. When his mother threatens him emotionally by telling him what she has seen in her dream, Obi realizes that he becomes so mellow and vulnerable. Surprisingly enough, he repudiates Clara and Clara feels humiliated at the familial and social rejection that she no longer feels the need to inform Obi about her pregnancy and she leaves Obi never to return again in his life. Obi, being a Western educated man, nurtures the idea that as an individual he has every right to marry a girl of his choice. This idea of Obi doesn’t go in tune with the traditional idea of marriage which is communal. To Obi, it all seems absurd and “scandalous” (232) if ever in the middle of the twentieth century one could not marry a girl simply because she was an outcast. Obi’s relation with Clara puts him in enormous pressure from all sides that it amounts to emotional blackmail. The President of the Umuofia
Progressive Union becomes doubtful of Obi’s faithfulness towards the clan. He says, “I have heard that you are moving around with a girl of doubtful ancestry, and even thinking of marrying her ...” (241), Obi’s father is shocked at Obi’s decision of marrying an osu and tells him straightaway, “You can’t marry the girl” (281). Even Obi’s mother threatens him by saying, “If you do the thing while I am alive, you will have my blood on your head, because I shall kill myself” (284). Had Obi been a man of firm conviction, he would have faced all the obstacles that came his way. But he lacks any system of value, and of religion – either the ancient beliefs of his ancestors or of Christianity and this makes him vulnerable in both the traditional and modern society. As a result, Obi’s relationship with Clara ends in a fiasco. The catastrophic end of the affair can be attributed to the conflict and clash between Obi’s idealism and the community’s aspirations. In this connection, Shyam S. Agarwalla’s comment is worth mentioning.

Achebe, through the collapse of Obi-Clara relationship suggests that the individual’s failure to come to terms with community ideals is directly consequential to the utter prostration of his own ideals.16
With Clara gone out of his life and his mother having been dead subsequently, Obi becomes a totally devastated man – an emotionally void man without any spiritual energy in his life.

Mercifully he had recently lost his mother and Clara had gone out of his life. The two events following closely on each other had dulled his sensibility and left him a different man, able to look words like ‘education’ and ‘promise’ squarely in the face (174).

Obi’s refusal to attend the funeral of his mother finds a parallel with Nwoye’s (Isaac Okonkwo) refusal to acknowledge his sadness at the death of his father, Oknkwo in *Things Fall Apart*. It is also important to note that Nwoye rejects his father for his extremity which he strongly opposes and he finds a new lease of life in Christianity. But, Obi has no such support to hold on and his refusal to attend his mother’s funeral comes from a shallow conviction without any concern for himself and others. It reveals the emotional vacuity that Obi nurtures – a product of a hybridized society with a new and complex set-up.

Obi wondered whether he had done the right thing in not setting out for Umuofia yesterday. But what could have been the point in going? It was more useful to send all the money he could for the funeral instead of wasting it on petrol to get home (306).
Obi feels a kind of a new release from guilt, and senses the end of his moralism.

Beyond death there are no ideal and no humbug, only reality. The impatient idealist says; ‘Give me a place to stand and I shall move the earth.’ But such a place does not exist. We all have to stand on the earth itself to go with her at her pace (310).

In this novel, Achebe has constructed some complex ironies that centre around social coherence and alienation. He has beautifully portrayed a society which is so unsure of itself and is unsettled in so many ways. The colonial impact has rendered an individual so powerless that one cannot find a meaningful existence and it leaves an indelible mark on the psyche of an individual. Here, Roderick Wilson’s remark can to noted:

In such a society with such complex and contradictory qualities and demands, it would be hard enough for a moral man of unified version to survive intake; but for the vacillating and disorganized Obi it is impossible.  

Obi, unable to resist the ever increasing entangling power of the corruptive force in the society, succumbs to the pressures pulling him down; he finally accepts
bribes, is caught and convicted by the government. Bit by bit, the corruptive environment of Lagos blackens his mentality and gradually he reaches the nadir of his life. A very painful situation develops where we find Obi being set apart by two opposite drives—concern for community and concern for individual. Whichever step he takes, he is always stranded by two kinds of moral error—putting the community ahead of his individual interest or putting his individual interest ahead of the interest of the community. This is the predicament of a hybrid man like Obi who has to dwell on dual value systems. The kind of the colonial world in which the colonized live has “disturbed their identity symbols to the extent that they no longer give reliable reference points to locate themselves socially, realize themselves sentimentally and declare (to self and others) who they are”. The moral anarchy of a hybridized society is succinctly expressed in the two proverbs spoken by the President of the Umuofia Progressive Union regarding Obi’s crime of accepting bribes, a meager sum of twenty pounds which is quite disgraceful.

I am against people reaping where they have not sown. But we have a saying that if you want to eat a toad you should look for a fat and juicy one (177).
The others in the community also hold the same view.

It is all lack of experience, said another man. He should not have accepted the money himself. What others do is tell you to go and hand it to their houseboy. Obi tried to do what everyone does without finding out how it was done. He told the proverb of the house rat who went swimming with his friend lizard and died from cold, for while the lizard’s scales kept him dry the rat’s hairy body remained wet (177).

What is remarkable here is that bribery is not taken as a big deal, but rather it is taken for granted. The clansmen do not mourn the plight of Obi, but rather feel sorry that he bungles in receiving bribes. Achebe wants to show that bribery, corruption and nepotism have become the fashion of the day and people have gone astray in all directions for personal gains. This is so different from the traditional tribal world where ethics and principles reign supreme. The clansmen have done away with all their custom and tradition and they become materialistic. Mr. Green, Obi’s boss, gives a very peculiar response to Obi’s crime. He feels that Obi’s act is nothing but a reflection of a widespread disease rooted in the African character itself. Green feels that western education is nothing but a waste on Africans, as the Africans are thoroughly corrupt.
They are all corrupt' repeated Mr Green. I'm all for equality and all that. I for one would hate to live in South Africa. But equality won't alter facts ... The fact that over countless centuries the African has been the victim of the worst climate in the world and of every imaginable disease. Hardly his fault. But he has been sapped mentally and physically. We have brought him Western education. But what use is it to him? (175).

Mr Green's remark is highly significant as it exposes the colonizer's view of the colonized as uncivilized, primitive and barbaric with no history of their own. The coloniser's view hurts the self-respect and dignity of the native, and this is what Achebe tries to focus in his novels - to restore once more the lost dignity and pride of his people. Achebe wants to show how colonialism marginalizes the traditional values and how the corruptive influence of the commodization of values has spread far and wide resulting in the cultural debasement in the behavior of the elite. Exchange values came to control even inter-familial relationships and human relationships are tainted by materialistic opportunism. One of the most serious consequences of the cultural and intellectual colonization is the cultivation of a dependent mentality conditioned only to imitate. The deliberate attempts of the neo-elite to ape or mimic western cultural
modes provide to them the most powerful illusion of having achieved cultural superiority or westernization — a mirage of dislocated happiness. The loss of one’s Africanness is confirmed by the ostentation of the western way of life by the natives. As a means of de-Africanizing personal appearance and constructing one’s personality into a highly visible centre of attraction that draws the oozing admiration of all, even dressing sense, hair styles, make-up and speech are all imitated and adopted by the natives, the westernized men in particular. Western education, which is highly esteemed, among the natives proves hollow and meaningless in the African society. Achebe wishes to show that Western education, instead of enlightening the minds of the natives, produces the most forceful alienating force and also a kind of negative energy making the elite totally incapable of reconciling themselves with the bitter and harsh reality. He also shows how in a transitional colonial society the values, sensibilities, beliefs and ideals of the colonizer and the colonized clash leaving an imbalance between individual and community and making the individual to depersonate himself from any kind of passionate commitment. This is exactly what happens in the life of Obi Okonkwo. In trying to please everyone, he pleases none. Achebe wants to show that individual cannot escape from social responsibility without paying a terrible price. In a hybridized society, the individuals are confronted with two orders of morality, neither of which is restored in the end with any sense of moral
justice. Obi's clansmen do not have any sense of responsibility and they feign ignorance when Obi is caught for accepting bribe.

Everybody wondered why. The learned judge, as we have seen, could not comprehend how an educated young man and so on and so forth. The British Council man, even the men of Umuofia, did not know. And we must presume that, inspite of his certitude, Mr Green did not know either (313).

Achebe vehemently denies the fetish and importance given to western education by the natives. Western education contains in its core a latent racism that erases the very identity and existence of the native. Achebe, through the failure of Obi, tries to unravel the rationale that works behind the programmes and policies of emancipation of natives. Western education itself bears in it the imprint of colonization process and the crisis arises from the alienating force generated by the much coveted education of the west.

Achebe also seems sadly to acknowledge the fact that the two dissimilar cultures of the colonizer and the colonized can never meet. They always move in divergent ways leaving no healthy space for the individual growth in the society. Individuals are always caught by the irreconcilable demands of the two worlds —
which are very conflicting and quite contradictory to one another. The natives as long as are rooted in their tribal environment lead a normal life with high moral values. But once they are exposed to the Western world, they lose the centre of their existence and naturally anarchy sets in. This is what Achebe seems to paint painfully in his novel, *No Longer at Ease*. He presents the predicament of a hybrid man who fails to make a meaningful adjustment in the new society where new and old values operate resulting in the problem of crisis of identity and values in conflict. Achebe seems to convey the message that the hope of refashioning of a new Nigeria by the neo-elite is dim and out of reach, given the social and political milieu in a corrupt transitional society which is full of ambiguities.
NOTES


14 J.P. Clark, as quoted by Felicity Riddy, "Language as a Theme in No Longer at Ease" in Critical Perspectives on Chinua Achebe. op.cit., p.151.


